

SALES TRANSACTION SUPPORT METHOD, SALES TRANSACTION SUPPORT APPARATUS

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0001] 1. Field of the Invention

[0002] The present invention relates to a sales transaction support method and apparatus for supporting sales of commodities as well as to a computer-readable recording medium storing programs for causing a computer to perform functions of the apparatus, and more particularly to a sales transaction support method and apparatus for supporting network sales transaction carried out via telecommunication lines as well as to a computer-readable recording medium storing programs for causing a computer to perform functions of the apparatus.

[0003] 2. Description of the Related Art

[0004] Conventionally, as one form of commodity sales, there has been employed a method in which commodities are publicized via magazines, catalogs, television and are sold by mail order or telephone order. In the method, a customer browses through pages of a magazine or the like containing photographs and the like showing commodities, and selects a commodity to purchase. Then, the customer orders the selected commodity e.g. by telephone, and receives the commodity delivered e.g. by mail.

[0005] Further, with recent development of telecommunication networks, such as the Internet, commodities have come to be sold through network sales transactions via the telecommunication networks. In such a network marketing, a customer accesses a home page of a Web site on the Internet and selects a commodity to purchase, based on sales information acquired from the Web site, and then orders the commodity via the Internet. In this case, similarly to the mail-order or telephone-order sales transaction, the purchased commodity is delivered to the customer e.g. by mail.

[0006] In a communication sales transaction, such as a network sales transaction, however, although it is possible for a customer to look at photographs of commodities, it is impossible to take a commodity by hand before purchase to check the features of the commodity. Therefore, the communication sales transaction is suitable for sales of electronic devices or apparatuses having definite functions, whereas it is unsuitable for sales of commodities, such as dresses, suits, shoes which a customer wants to try on before purchase so as to determine, based on his/her own judgment, whether the commodity suits him/her.

[0007] For instance, when a customer wants to purchase a suit or dress through a network sales transaction, it is often difficult for the customer to imagine himself/herself in the suit or dress clearly. In this case, it can happen that only after the customer actually wears the delivered suit or dress, he/she finds the color or design of the suit or dress does not become him/her. For this reason, retailers dealing with clothes have difficulties in using network sales transactions particularly for sales of stylish suits, dresses, and the like. Besides, the network sales of stylish commodities are risky to the retailers in that the commodities may be returned from customers.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0008] It is an object of the invention to provide a sales transaction support method and apparatus which enables a

customer to determine, by his/her own judgment, whether a commodity which may be purchased through a communication sales transaction suits him/her, and then select the commodity for purchase, as well as to a computer-readable recording medium storing programs which causes a computer to perform functions of the sales transaction support apparatus.

[0009] To attain the above object, according to a first aspect of the invention, there is provided a sales transaction support method for supporting a sale of a commodity. The sales transaction support method is characterized by comprising a commodity-presenting step for presenting the commodity, a try-on simulation step for providing a try-on simulation image of an object virtually wearing the commodity by using commodity image information of an image of the commodity presented by the commodity-presenting step and object image information of an image of the object, and a transaction step for executing a transaction process for the commodity.

[0010] To attain the above object, according to a second aspect of the invention, there is provided a sales transaction support apparatus for supporting a sale of a commodity. The sales transaction support apparatus is characterized by comprising commodity-presenting process means for presenting the commodity, try-on simulation process means for providing a try-on simulation image of an object virtually wearing the commodity by using commodity image information of an image of the commodity presented by the commodity-presenting process means and object image information of an image of the object, and transaction process means for executing a transaction process for the commodity.

[0011] The above and other objects, features and advantages of the present invention will become apparent from the following description when taken in conjunction with the accompanying drawings which illustrate preferred embodiments of the present invention by way of example.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0012] FIG. 1 is a diagram showing a system configuration of a sales transaction support system according to the present invention;

[0013] FIG. 2 is a diagram illustrating contents of information stored in commodity presentation information storage means;

[0014] FIG. 3 is a diagram illustrating contents of information stored in try-on simulation information storage means;

[0015] FIG. 4 is a diagram illustrating contents of information stored in customer information storage means;

[0016] FIG. 5 is a diagram illustrating contents of information stored in transaction information storage means;

[0017] FIG. 6 is a diagram illustrating contents of information stored in transaction information storage means;

[0018] FIG. 7 is a diagram illustrating contents of information stored in transaction information storage means;

[0019] FIG. 8 is a flowchart showing the overall operation of the sales transaction support system;